

LEVITICUS

Lesson 15 - Chapter 11 Continued

We began Leviticus chapter 11 last time and we'll continue it this week. The study of chapter 11 centers around the subjects of clean versus unclean and holy versus common. It is interesting to me that it is only Judaism where these words are used regularly and where the common religious person has at least some education in their meaning. If you use these same words around modern day Believers, you'll get blank stares and some will wonder out loud whether those terms (other than holy) are even in the Bible.

But the subject is central to the Judeo-Christian faith, and the lack of understanding equally central to the weakness of the Church in this age. Let's see if we can't delve a little further into the matter today and perhaps take a step towards recovering these key God-principles.

The final case we discussed in our last meeting had to do with a dead animal (such as a common mouse) coming into contact with some object (such as a pot or a bowl), and thus transmitting the uncleanness of death onto that object.

So, the question becomes, now that something has become polluted with unclean dead animal, what is to be done with that object? The next few verses give us the answer. So let's re-read the last half of Leviticus chapter 11 to get our bearings.

RE-READ LEVITICUS CHAPTER 11:29 - end

Now, most bible translations have the last half of verse 32 stating something to the effect of "any article, or any utensil, made of wood, or leather, or any article of clothing....".... something like that. But, that's not really correct. In the original Hebrew, what is typically translated INCORRECTLY as "article" or "utensil" is instead the word "vessel". The Hebrew word "**keli**" specifically refers to a container of some kind, like a bowl, or a water pitcher made out of wood, or in the reference to something made out of skin, like a wineskin. The idea to understand here is that the vessel is made out of something porous and therefore is absorbent of what it is filled with. The solution for cleansing such a vessel is that it can be dipped in water.....that is, it can be washed with water. After the ritual washing that lasts until sunset.....the end of the current day and the beginning of the next.....the vessel was considered to be ritually clean once again.

However, as we're told in verse 33, if a dead animal falls **into** an earthenware vessel...pottery.....it must be destroyed and never used again. The same goes for an earthenware oven or stove that could become defiled; it must be broken and no longer used. Exactly why this is, scholars aren't sure because glazing and firing of clay pots was a known

technology in the Land of Canaan at this time, and when glazed the problem with porosity and absorption is solved; yet, there is no mention of it in this verse that one needs to distinguish a fired vessel vs. and unfired one.

The elaborateness of the Judaism purity regulations that developed over the centuries is staggering. An entire tractate in the Mishnah called ***Kelim*** is devoted to this subject. One of the keys to the minds of the sages was whether a dead creature fell ONTO or INTO a vessel. Most of the time a creature falling ONTO a vessel meant the vessel could be washed; but when it fell INTO that vessel most of the time the vessel AND its contents had to be destroyed. Therefore a lid on the vessel was a good defense against the most serious and expensive incidents of contact with a dead creature.

As might be expected not only the vessel but also everything that was in it when the dead animal fell into it was rendered unclean. However this comes with a caveat; that moisture must be present inside the vessel. That is if there was dry grain inside the container then all that was needed was to remove the dead animal, cleanse the vessel, and the dry grain would be considered acceptable to eat. However if the grain had water mixed with it.....for instance, it was dough that was being left to rise.....then the grain had to be disposed of. It seems that key to transmitting the pollution is water. Or if this was a water pot, or a wine vat, then all of the liquid was now defiled and must be destroyed.

Verse 36 tells us that if a dead animal falls into a water well, a cistern, or a water spring, there is NO transmission of pollution to the well, cistern, or spring. However, the unfortunate person assigned with the duty to remove the carcass DOES become unclean. Here is the principle about water: when it is attached to the earth (in a cistern or lake or stream or Mikvah) the water CANNOT be made unclean. On the other hand water put into a portable vessel like a pot or a bucket CAN be made unclean because it is no longer naturally attached to the earth. This lends itself to explaining why it is that a ritually unclean person or thing can be made clean by being immersed in water PROVIDED that water is attached to the earth; water attached to the earth cannot contract uncleanness, it can only lend it purity to what is unclean. Keep this in mind, always, because if you do it will help you to understand many things about the Hebrews' ritual process and even some of the reasons Yeshua did what he did.

Verse 38 tells us that dry seed (for planting crops) is not contaminated if a dead animal falls onto it; however, if the seed has been dampened somehow, then the seed is unclean and cannot be used.

Things switch a little in verse 39, because now CLEAN animals are dealt with. And the idea is that death makes a normally clean thing unclean. So for instance if a goat (a clean animal) dies for some reason, the person who touches its carcass is unclean until sundown. Someone who EATS this formerly clean, but now dead, animal also becomes unclean and must wash his garments; the same goes for someone who simply carries the dead animal. Of course the cause of the animal's death is the key. If the animal was slaughtered for a sacrifice, or just for a meal, that's fine.....no uncleanness exists. It's when the animal dies from disease, or is killed by a predator, or dies by accident that it contracts and transmits uncleanness.

Verses 41-44 again address the concept of “*shekets*”meaning abomination. And, the instruction against eating any living creature that swarms....in Hebrew “*sharats*”, is repeated. Obviously this is a VERY serious matter that it would be repeated within just a few verses. Snakes, frogs, lizards, rats, mice, alligators, crocodiles, anything that slithers on its belly, crawls on all 4's and darts all around, are forbidden. Why? Because for Yehoveh's own good reasons these things are detestable to Him.....and the one who disobeys and DOES eat these things becomes detestable so to speak to God (at least temporarily); not something any Hebrew, nor certainly any of us, would ever want to be labeled as.

And, verse 45 reminds us just why God has set up this stringent set of rules for Israel: Because since He is holy, His people must also be holy. Only something, or someone, holy can be in the presence of His absolute and preeminent holiness. See, this goes back to the Genesis concept that God made mankind in His image. God is holy, so man is to be holy. As intelligent as a dog, or a chimp, or a dolphin can be, there appears to be no evidence either Scripturally OR scientifically to show that any living creature except for a human has the ability to comprehend God and a spiritual world. This is unique to mankind above all other living creatures.....all of whom Yehoveh places great value. And, this is one reason why men are permitted by God to kill and eat other living creatures, but these same living creatures are NOT permitted by God to kill and eat men. The Bible sentences any animal, which has killed a human being for any reason, to death.

This chapter ends with a postscript, which is typical for that region in those times. Just as the chapter began by telling Israel what it was that would be discussed, so now it concludes by reiterating the purpose of the just spoken laws and commands. And it is that the Israelites might distinguish between the clean and the forbidden foods...or as we learned in Hebrew, between the *Tamei* and the *Tahor*. It also involves a Biblical concept that has largely been in the background since the book of Genesis.....the concept of dividing, electing, and separating. Those who were here for Genesis might remember that principle, although it's been quite a while. To sum it up: in the beginning God went through a whole series of actions of dividing, electing, and separating. He divided dry land from the waters and separated them. He divided light from darkness, in the sense of evil from good, and separated them. He divided daytime from nighttime, and separated them. He divided the water vapor in the air, from the condensed water that formed the seas, and He separated them. He set the minor lights in the heavens, like stars, to designate and divide seasons. And He created Man and divided him and separated him from all other living creatures just as eventually He would divide, elect, and separate Israel away and above all other nations on earth.

So this same process is at play in dividing, electing, and separating those foods man may eat versus those foods he may not. In fact although the typical translation for verse 47 says something to the affect of “....for distinguishing between....the living things that may be eaten...”... it more literally says: “.....that there may be SEPARATION between the clean and the unclean”. Now as we're becoming more familiar with the concepts of Torah, and of Leviticus, we can see the important difference between the words “distinguish between” and “be separate”. In a world that demands political correctness and a tolerance for all things, *distinguishing* is a much milder concept than *separating*. Or distinguishing can be seen as the preliminary step before one divides and separates. Yet in the original Hebrew Bible it is

quite emphatic that just KNOWING the difference, which is the idea of the word “distinguish”, is worlds apart from acting on that knowledge, which is the idea of the separating. We’re not just to know, to distinguish, good from evil or right from wrong.....we’re to actively separate the two. We’re to stand firmly on the side of right and good and away from wrong and evil. And that is MUCH harder and takes much more commitment. But, that is exactly what is expected of those who are Near-God. Believers. Us.

LEVITICUS 11 POSTSCRIPT

I’m going to begin to put together some puzzle pieces for you today; pieces that hopefully might help in explaining the many questions you have concerning the relationships between sin and uncleanness, holiness and uncleanness. Keep that word RELATIONSHIPS in mind during this lesson because it is going to be the key to your grasping in a whole new way the method Yehoveh speaks to us through the Bible. But, to get where we need to go, I need to preface it with a discussion of language and styles of thinking because these are the real barriers for us to cross so we can get to the truth.

One of the more contentious debates that surround the Bible concerns language. That is the current widely held belief is that the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, while the New Testament was first penned in Greek. There are scholars who are certain that parts of the New Testament were likely originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, but almost immediately were translated into Greek and widely distributed in that language; we’ll not be delving into that argument, today. Rather we’ll just move forward with the assumption that Hebrew was the OT language, and Greek the new; because the oldest manuscripts found for each testament thus far are indeed Hebrew for the OT, and Greek for the NT.

However that doesn’t change another important assumption, and this one is a biggie: that Hebrews wrote the entire Bible, OT and NT. The possible exception was Luke, yet even that is debatable. Be that as it may even IF Luke was not a Hebrew he represents but one small piece of the Biblical record and in fact what Luke did was to paste together written personal accounts from the HEBREWS that had information on his subject; that all other Bible writers were Hebrews has come up against no serious challenge.

That said it makes the Bible a thoroughly Hebrew document. Does the specific culture (Hebrew) of the Biblical writers actually matter? You bet it does. It is a given in sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and just simple observation that language is a reflection of its culture, and that any culture is imbedded in its language. When, at the Tower of Babel, Yehoveh divided and separated the one common language of the world into many, the result was more far reaching than simply that a whole bunch of people who suddenly had almost no way to communicate among themselves. People who COULD still communicate among themselves, likely extended families and tribes, stuck to one another and formed groups out of necessity; and then the groups went their separate ways, achieving the Lord’s purpose of dispersing and populating the whole globe. Inevitably, though, each of these language groups, now effectively divided, separated, and isolated by language from the other groups, developed their own unique concepts and ideas of life and death, morals and ethics, law and justice, priorities and

values, and so on. They developed into their own separate people groups, nations, and cultures....each with their own language, customs, and values. So language and culture are indelibly linked. Every unique culture has developed a set of philosophies and concepts that it operates on; and many of these are totally unique to that particular culture. More, the native language of that culture developed words, found ONLY within their language, which embodied some of their one-of-a-kind cultural concepts. Therefore some cultures have ideas and concepts that simply have no parallel in other cultures or languages.

The point is that language and the culture it represents often have concepts that are very difficult to communicate to anyone **outside** that culture because a) there are NO **words** that have been invented within outside cultures to express that particular concept; and b) that is because it is possible that certain concepts exist ONLY within that ONE culture in the first place, so naturally there would be no words for it in other languages and cultures.

My wife has a lifelong friend who is a Mexican believer. She explains that there are a number of words in the Mexican Spanish dialect for the word "love". And each of these words expresses a slightly different aspect of love; the problem is that most of these Mexican words have no direct English equivalent, because those particular aspects of love are foreign to Americans.....they only exist in the Mexican culture.....so it is most difficult, if not impossible, to communicate those thoughts to someone OUTSIDE their Mexican culture. This is the crux of the problem we have when trying to understand the Bible.....when trying to comprehend what those words meant to the ancient Hebrew people who wrote them rather than simply what they SAY when translated in to a different language and applied to a different culture.

Complex, isn't it? But there's more. Hebrew culture, in the Bible times, also revolved around a certain **way** of thinking; a way that was quite common for that era. The way information was mentally processed was naturally reflected in their language.....Hebrew. Now, of all people, it has been a most difficult challenge for me personally to even comprehend the idea that there exists more than one way of thinking.....my way.....and my wife can give a great big amen to that! But what I mean by "way of thinking" is NOT about how humans often put different emphasis on various matters, or disagree on what is important, or what has priority, etc.; rather, it's that the STYLE of thinking is entirely different. How conclusions are arrived at is different. Today the vast majority of the world.....certainly the Western world.....uses a style of thinking that does not appear to have existed prior to the Greeks popularizing it beginning around 450 BC. And it is that Greek style of processing information and forming conclusions that the bulk of the world, particularly the developed world, uses today and it is very different from the way things were before that time.

Every person in this room, and all the translators of the Bible going back to it's very first translation, in 250 BC, from Hebrew to a foreign language (Greek)..... thinks in what scholars term the **rational/logical** style (whether you realize it or not). But the Biblical Hebrews, from before Moses up to and including those at the time of Jesus and the Apostles, did NOT think that way (although by the time of Jesus some of that thought style did seep into the Jews of the Diaspora). They did NOT think in the rational/logical style; rather they operated in a style of thought scholars call **analogic**. What that means for us is that often what the Hebrew writers of the Bible **meant** is totally obscured by the difficulty of attempting to translate analogic Hebrew thought into modern day Western thought style by means of rational/logical based languages

like Greek, Latin, and English.

I'm going to explain the significant difference between the ***analogic thought*** of the writers of the Bible.....and the ***rational/logic thought*** of the Bible interpreters and of each of us. So I'd like to ask you to take a deep breath, shake the cobwebs, and pay close attention. After all what could be more important than recovering the way the writers of the Bible thought so that we can understand what, exactly, they meant by what they said?

First, let's define rational/logical thought. This is the style of thinking that we all unconsciously use because we have grown up with it. It's unlikely any of us have ever been exposed to an alternative style of thinking.....and probably wouldn't have recognized it for what it was even if we had observed it. Everything in our modern Western culture, and in most of the world's cultures, reflects rational/logical thought and has for 2000 years. I say most because some cultures, like the Chinese and other Asian oriental peoples, still incorporate analogical thought to a great degree in their culture. A well-known saying often aimed at the Chinese is that they are inscrutable.....and that is usually mouthed by a businessman or a diplomat out of frustration in trying to communicate and deal with these Orientals. That is we simply can't seem to understand these strange people.....how they think is a mystery to us. The point is that rational/logical thought is by no means universal. Nor, is rational/logical thought necessarily BETTER and more ADVANCED than analogical thought. It is simply different.....practically the opposite, actually. And it is not something whereby we made a conscious decision to choose to think in one style or the other. The rational/logical style of thought is present in all we are surrounded with, and taught, in our culture.

Rational/logical thought is the embedded in science. The so-called Scientific Method that we were taught in grade school necessarily utilizes rational/logical thought; the two cannot be separated. Rational/logical thought relies on reasoning and operates on a philosophy of cause and effect....if I do this, then the result is that. It is systemized thought. That is it operates on the principle that everything that exists is part of a larger system. And every system is structured such that we can break it apart into smaller and smaller sub-systems and examine these sub-systems separately and see how they work.

For instance, in the language of science, a car is a system. It is composed of many sub-systems like a motor, a transmission, a body, brakes, electrical wiring, seating, heating and air conditioning, etc. An engine, by itself, can be developed and examined completely outside of the car. In fact that same engine, and the principles that guide its development, can be used in any number of applications and systems.....such as boats and trucks and airplanes and electricity generators. Alone, each of the many sub-systems is complete and whole. Each is self-contained and performs a function. But when we connect several of these sub-systems together, presto.....we can have an automobile.

As another example: Western medicine operates under the same rational/logical philosophy. A human body is traditionally looked at as a system, consisting of many subsystems....like our skeletal frame, our brain, our lungs, our digestive tract, our eyes, ears, nose and throat, etc. If we have a stomach problem we go to a person who specializes on the stomach sub-system. If we break a bone, we go to a person who specializes on that. If we have a problem seeing, we

go to an eye doctor, and so on.

That's all well and good, but Western medicine generally does NOT see a soul as a SEPARATE part and SUB SYSTEM of a human being. Rather, the soul is simply part of our brain function. A soul is a belief rationally/logically, it is really nothing more than the result of how our brain works. Rationally/logically there is no identifiable part of a human that can be separated out and examined or repaired called a "soul". I won't even get into the concept of a Spirit, because that has no meaning in modern Western medicine.

Rational/logical thought is generally broken down into two main types of reasoning: inductive and deductive. Deductive reasoning operates on combining a series of hard, cold facts, in order to achieve a conclusion.

Fact #1: All dogs have 4 legs.
Fact #2: Rover is a dog.
Conclusion: Rover has 4 legs.

Simple enough.

But Inductive reasoning does not seek to achieve a mathematical certainty as deductive reasoning does. Rather inductive reasoning occurs when we gather bits and pieces of information together and then combine it with our life experiences and our knowledge in order to make an observation about what **seems** to be true. Here is an example of inductive reasoning:

Observation #1: John came to class late this morning.
Observation #2: John's hair was messy.
Experience: John's hair is usually neat and combed.
Conclusion: John must have overslept.

When we observe people, and deal with people, we tend to use inductive reasoning in making our conclusions. Yet, whether inductive or deductive, it all is still based on rational/logical thinking.

Rational/logical thinking is linear and evolutionary; A leads to B, and B leads to C. Rational/logical thinking always asks "why?" Rational/logical thought says that history is a straight line that starts with some undefined point in the past, and goes until infinity; and that history is non-repeating, and the past is not a predictor of the future. Patterns do not exist from a historical standpoint.

The thing about **rational/logic** thinking is that it operates BEST in a vacuum; away from relationships and connections to other things that might be similar or that happened previously. Truth and relevance are pragmatic; that is, in the rational/logical thinking style, the question of "WHY" something happened is defined by HOW something happened, and exactly WHAT happened. It's a very narrow search for relevant information, because it pertains to a specific event at a specific time. The past and the future have no relevance to one another, and little if

any relevance to the current situation.

What I have just described to you is what the Bible would call Greek thinking. It is the style of thinking of the Hellenists, who of course were at odds with the Jews. And, in a few minutes, I think you'll see why that style of thinking simply doesn't know what to do with the Hebrew style of thought: analogic thought.

Before I try to explain analogic thought, the type of thought the writers of the Bible used, let me state that there isn't anything wrong, or ungodly per se, nor faulty about the rational/logical thought stylePROVIDED we acknowledge that it is not the ONLY style of thinking, and that it has built-in limitations; for instance, the universe as created by Yehoveh doesn't necessarily operate in a rational/logical way, try as scholars and scientists might to pound square pegs into round holes. Rational/logical thinking necessarily is "man centered". It is totally dependent on factoring in the 4 dimensions that are observable to our Universe: length, width, height, and time. The credo is that only things that can be scientifically observed and tested are real. It relies on the power of the human mind to discover, and then to use those discoveries to make decisions and judgments. What cannot be "proved" by logic and reason is automatically invalid.

Now Analogic thinking is an entirely different animal; it operates based on established patterns and models. Analogic thinking searches for and recognizes common foundational truths that are shared between similar things, even though those particular similar things may not be completely alike. For instance, the operation of the wings of an airplane is, to a degree, like the operation of the wings of a bird or a flying insect. Certainly, beyond the ability to fly, and having some structures that stick out called "wings", there are precious few similarities between birds and jets. Yet the same principles of aerodynamics are at work in both flying creatures and airplanes.

Analogic thinking relies on relationships and connections. For instance notice that what we've been reading in the Torah in general, and Leviticus in particular, does not attempt to explain **the reason** for each new law or instruction; rather another, but similar, law or instruction is added to the mix....and then another, and yet more; the relationship between all these laws and instructions creates an overall picture that establishes the meaning. So if you're like me and we ask ourselves when studying Leviticus, "why can't we eat Pork?"..... in reality the answer is simply, "because it conforms to the underlying principle behind all the other laws". That is the new rule is what it is for the purpose of staying in perfect relationship to all the other rules. The original Genesis pattern therefore becomes the context in which everything else that comes later must conform.

Yeshua spoke often in a particular kind of analogic thought-style called parables. Embodied in His sometimes-puzzling parables were spiritual principles and patterns that exist and never change; but he got his point across by applying principles of established and understood patterns to other things that didn't, on the surface, seem similar. In fact sometimes the dissimilarities were so big that people had (and still have) a hard time understanding the meaning of his analogies. Why? Because they didn't recognize the pattern that connected it all. What does a mustard seed have to do with the Kingdom of Heaven? Why would anyone

throw valuable pearls to farm animals, pigs? What does running out of oil to keep an oil lamp burning have to do with His return? The answer is in long established spiritual patterns and principles.

The thing about analogic thinking is that it MUST have a pre-existent original pattern from which to progress and model itself after. So the important issue in the analogic thinking style of Biblical characters is “which **pattern** is true and relevant to this current situation?” Therefore in the Greek style of thinking the search is always for “why”; but in the Hebrew style (the Biblical style) of thinking the search is always for “which”. Upon recognizing which pattern fits a particular regulation or circumstance, the meaning becomes clear.

Analogic thinking also tends to see things as microcosms. A microcosm simply means it's a little world all unto itself; a miniature universe that is a model of a larger and more elaborate one. A family, for instance, is a microcosm of a community; that is, a family is but a miniature-sized group of people that is similar in principle and structure to a larger grouping of people called a community.

Now that we understand the basics of the problem, let's get to the practical terms of what this means to us and to the study of Torah. We know that Hebrew is a language embodying a culture of analogic thinking. On the other hand Greek is a language embodying a culture of rational/logical thinking. Hebrew is a completely separate culture, with a completely unique language designed to communicate the Hebrews' unique concepts; and the Hebrew concepts as we see in the Bible are based on the mind of God and the information He gave to them and them alone in the form of the Torah and then later Scriptures.

Greek is a widespread and variant culture with a unique language that was designed to communicate its particular cultural concepts and principles; Greek culture is based on human discovery, human philosophy, science and technology, and manmade systems of morality and truth finding. How does a Greek system of thinking and problem solving.....rational/logical thinking..... extract truth and meaning from an entirely opposite system of thinking? How do Hebrew concepts that existed ONLY in the minds of Hebrews, born of a Hebrew culture and expressed by the Hebrew language, get communicated to the minds of men (like us) who dwell in a Greek culture which does not have these same concepts, nor a vocabulary in their own tongue to describe and communicate them? Answer: not very well.

Now, is Hebrew somehow GOOD and Greek somehow BAD? Is Hebrew Godly and Greek ungodly. No.....not at all. God created all language. In fact, he absolutely FORCED language variation on the human race at the Tower of Babel. And, as Dr. Robert McGee pointed out to me, God knew, and had good reason to allow, the NT to hit the streets running in the Greek language.....as imperfect as it might be to properly illuminate these Hebrew concepts.

So, our task in Torah Class, and my passion, is to figure out just how to look at the Bible through these hopelessly rational/logical eyes of ours, and extract a meaning that was formulated in analogic thought, language and culture. I have no doubt it can be done to a great degree. But, it takes a willingness to let go of false doctrines and traditions created by rational/logical thinking men who despised the Hebrews and Israel; men who could not bear

the thought of bending and trying to approach the Hebrew scriptures and the NT from the different mindset of those who actually wrote it. This would have involved validating the Jewish culture and Jewish thought style; something that, by the middle to late 2nd century, was unthinkable for the gentile controlled church that wanted no form of Jewishness to remain.

We conclude this next week and move into Leviticus chapter 12.